

CLAIMS

1. A test tool feeder comprising: a storage portion for storing a plurality of test tools; and a transporting member provided
5 with at least one loading portion for loading a test tool stored in the storage portion, the transporting member transporting test tools one by one;

wherein the storage portion includes a plurality of storage spaces each storing a plurality of test tools.

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2. The test tool feeder according to claim 1, wherein each of the storage spaces is selectively brought into a state in which the test tools are taken out from the storage space and a state in which the test tools are not taken out from the storage space.

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3. The test tool feeder according to claim 2, wherein the state in which the test tools are not taken out from the storage space is achieved by lifting the test tools stored in the storage space so that the test tools do not come into contact with the
20 transporting member.

4. The test tool feeder according to claim 3, wherein the state in which the test tools are taken out from the storage space is achieved by bringing at least some of the test tools stored
25 in the storage space into contact with the transporting member.

5. The test tool feeder according to claim 4, wherein the transporting member comprises a rotating member.

6. The test tool feeder according to claim 5, further comprising a movable member for lifting the test tools stored in at least one of the plurality of storage spaces.

5 7. The test tool feeder according to claim 6, wherein the movable member includes at least one pivotable lift portion, and wherein the rotating member includes a recess for receiving said at least one lift portion.

10 8. The test tool feeder according to claim 7, wherein the test tools stored in the storage space come into contact with the rotating member when the lift portion is received in the recess, and

15 wherein the test tools stored in the storage space are lifted by the movable member so as not to come into contact with the rotating member when the lift portion is not received in the recess.

9. The test tool feeder according to claim 8, wherein the lift portion of the movable member is held in contact with the rotating member by gravity.

10. The test tool feeder according to claim 8, wherein, when the lift portion is received in the recess, the lift portion 25 is positioned closer to a center of the rotating member than a circumferential surface of the rotating member.

11. The test tool feeder according to claim 9, wherein the selection between the state in which the test tools are taken out from the storage space and the state in which the test tools are not taken out from the storage space is made by controlling 5 a movable range of said at least one loading portion.

12. The test tool feeder according to claim 11, wherein the plurality of storage spaces include a first and a second storage spaces, and

10 wherein said at least one loading portion includes a first loading portion for loading the test tools stored in the first storage space, and a second loading portion for loading the test tools stored in the second storage space.

15 13. The test tool feeder according to claim 12, wherein the first storage space and the second storage space are separated by a partition member disposed in the storage portion, and wherein the movable member is supported by the partition member.

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14. The test tool feeder according to claim 13, wherein the movable member is capable of lifting the test tools stored in one of the first and the second storage spaces.

25 15. The test tool feeder according to claim 12, wherein the rotating member is rotatable in both a forward direction and a reverse direction, and

wherein the test tool feeder further comprises a rotation

controller for controlling a rotation direction and a rotation angle of the rotating member to control the movable range of the first and the second loading portions.

5 16. The test tool feeder according to claim 15, wherein the rotation controller controls the rotation direction and the rotation angle of the rotating member in a first movable range in which the lift portion is held in contact with a circumferential surface of the rotating member or in a second 10 movable range in which the lift portion is received in the recess,

wherein, in the first movable range, test tools are not taken out from the first storage space while test tools are taken out from the second storage space,

15 wherein, in the second movable range, test tools are taken out from the first storage space while test tools are not taken out from the second storage space.

17. The test tool feeder according to claim 7, wherein the plurality of storage spaces include a first and a second storage 20 spaces, and

wherein said at least one lift portion includes a first lift portion for lifting the plurality of test tools stored in the first storage space and a second lift portion for lifting the plurality of test tools stored in the second storage space.

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18. The test tool feeder according to claim 17, wherein the first and the second lift portions are pivoted by an actuator.

19. The test tool feeder according to claim 17, wherein, when one of the first and the second lift portions lifts the test tools stored in the first and the second storage spaces, the other one of the first and the second lift portions does not 5 lift the test tools stored in the first and the second storage spaces.

20. The test tool feeder according to claim 4, wherein the transporting member transports the test tools horizontally.

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21. The test tool feeder according to claim 20, further comprising a movable member for lifting the test tools stored in at least one of the plurality of storage spaces.

15 22. The test tool feeder according to claim 21, wherein the movable member includes a pivotable lift portion, and wherein the transporting member includes a recess for receiving the lift portion.

20 23. The test tool feeder according to claim 22, wherein the test tools stored in the storage space are held in contact with the transporting member when the lift portion is received in the recess, and

25 wherein the test tools stored in the storage space are lifted by the movable member so as not to come into contact with the transporting member when the lift portion is not received in the recess.

24. The test tool feeder according to claim 23, wherein when the lift portion is received in the recess, the lift portion is positioned lower than an upper surface of the transporting member.

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25. The test tool feeder according to claim 24, wherein the selection between the state in which the test tools are taken out from the storage space and the state in which the test tools are not taken out from the storage space is made by controlling 10 a movable range of the loading portion.

26. A test tool feeder comprising: a storage portion for storing a plurality of test tools; and a transporting member for transporting the test tools individually;

15 wherein selection can be made between a state in which the test tools are taken out from the storage space and a state in which the test tools are not taken out from the storage space.

27. The test tool feeder according to claim 26, wherein the 20 state in which the test tools are not taken out from the storage space is achieved by lifting the test tools stored in the storage space so that the test tools do not come into contact with the transporting member, and

25 wherein the state in which the test tools are taken out from the storage space is achieved by bringing at least some of the test tools stored in the storage space into contact with the transporting member.

28. The test tool feeder according to claim 27, further comprising a movable member for lifting the test tools stored in the storage space.

5 29. The test tool feeder according to claim 28, wherein the movable member includes a lift portion which is pivoted by an actuator.